Distr.
GENERAL

E/C.12/Q/SWE/2
13 December 2000

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC SOCIAL
AND CULTURAL RIGHTS
Pre-sessional working group
4-8 December 2000

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

List of issues to be taken up in connection with the consideration of the fourth periodic report of Sweden concerning the rights covered by articles 1 to 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/4/Add.4)

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Land and people

1. Please provide the latest information about the country: land, and population broken down by age, gender and by national and minority groups. Please also provide social and economic statistics indicating the current situation in Sweden (such as GDP, per capita income, minimum wage, rate of inflation and size of external and internal debt).

B. General legal framework within which human rights are protected

2. Please indicate the reasons, if any, why the Covenant appears not to be directly applicable in the legal system of Sweden. Please indicate whether there are any cases where the Covenant was invoked in a court of law, as well as the outcome of such cases.

3. The Committee would appreciate receiving updated information on the State party's position with regard to the proposal for an optional protocol to the Covenant made by the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna.

4. Please provide updated information regarding the National Human Rights Plan of Action adopted by the Government of the State party, and any of its achievements.

II. ISSUES RELATING TO THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT (arts. 1-5)

Article 1. Self-determination

5. Please provide information on the degree of autonomy granted to the Sami people.

Article 2.2. Non-discrimination

6. Please indicate the extent to which the provisions of article 2.2 of the Covenant are covered in national legislation with regard to all the grounds for discrimination spelled out in the article.

7. What are the effects of the labour market-related measures adopted by the State party to combat discrimination in the labour market (as mentioned in paragraphs 73 to 84 of the fourteenth periodic report submitted by the State party to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/362/Add.5))?

8. Please indicate what measures are taken by the State party to combat racism and xenophobia, including neo-nazi organizations and their "white power" music.

9. Swedish development cooperation and assistance consist, inter alia, in promoting democracy and human rights. Please provide more details on the nature and scope of this assistance.

10. Please provide information on the situation of aliens who are not citizens of the European Union and of refugees with regard to their enjoyment of the rights recognized by the Covenant and indicate whether there are any restrictions imposed by the State party that affect them.

Article 3. Equal rights of men and women

11. Please provide detailed information on the extent of the problem of trafficking in women and on the measures taken to address this problem.

12. Please indicate whether the State party has established any programmes to support prostitutes, for example by assisting them in finding alternative modes of employment and providing them with medical, welfare and psycho-social counselling.

III. ISSUES RELATING TO SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT (arts. 6-15)

Article 6. Right to work

13. The Committee would like to receive updated information on the evolution of the level of unemployment over the past five years, by economic sector, sex and age group.

Article 7. Right to just and favourable conditions of work

14. Please indicate whether the State party intends acceding to ILO Convention No. 131 on Minimum Wage-Fixing and ILO Convention No. 106 on Weekly Rest.

15. Since the State party does not have a national minimum wage, does it intend to adopt legal provisions establishing such a national minimum wage?

16. Please give more details regarding measures taken by the State party to implement the principle of equal opportunity for promotion (paragraph 90 of the State party's report).

Article 8. Right to strike

17. Please indicate how many legal and illegal strikes have occurred in the State party during the past five years.

Article 9. Right to social security

18. Please indicate how the cutbacks in the social welfare programmes in the 1990s have affected the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups in society.

19. According to paragraph 149 of the State party's report, the social security benefit rate is based on a minimum national level. Please indicate how this is calculated, how it compares with the national average income, and the annual increments in the benefit as compared with yearly inflation rates.

Article 10. Protection of the family, mothers and children

20. Please indicate whether the State party intends ratifying the ILO Convention on Maternity Protection (No. 103).

21. Please provide up-to-date information regarding the legal provisions prohibiting child pornography, including any prosecutions instituted and judgements given in relation to those provisions. In particular, please provide guidance regarding the definition of "sexual maturity", mentioned in paragraph 178 of the State party's report.

22. The Committee would welcome updated information from the State party in relation to the problem of domestic violence against women, as well as its measures to combat this problem and results achieved in this respect.

23. Paragraph 232 of the State party's report shows a gradual increase in the percentage of the population receiving an income below the poverty line. Please indicate their percentage over the past five years, together with statistics, broken down according to sex, age and ethnic group.

24. Please provide statistics on the number of complaints under the crime of "gross violation of a woman's integrity" in the State party (paragraph 21 of the State party's report). Please explain any disparity between the number of complaints and the number of prosecutions instituted, and judgements given, in respect of this crime.

Article 11. Right to an adequate standard of living

25. Please account for the increasing disparities in income and economic resources in Swedish society and indicate the measures adopted by the State party to remedy the situation.

26. Please provide updated statistics regarding people having a second occupation to secure an adequate standard of living.

27. Please provide more detailed information on the measures taken by the State party to address the problem of the homeless. Does the Government cooperate with any national NGOs regarding homelessness?

28. Please indicate if the State party has adopted any programme or taken any other measures to improve the situation of people living in "overcrowded conditions" (paragraph 238 of the State party's report).

Article 12. Right to physical and mental health

29. Please provide updated information on changes in national health laws and other policies negatively affecting the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups in society. What is the percentage of the budget allotted to the health sector?

30. Please indicate measures adopted to provide healthcare for older persons.

31. What is the State party doing to combat the increasing health problems, often related to drugs and alcohol, among young people?

Article 13. Right to education

32. Please provide detailed information regarding the nature, function and sources of finance of "independent schools" in the State party (paragraph 288 of the State party's report).

33. According to information at the Committee's disposal, children of immigrants have more difficulties in school than Swedish children. Please state the reasons for this and what remedies the State party has taken to overcome this problem.

34. It is reported that there is a lack of teachers in the State party. Please indicate what measures the State party is taking to address this problem.

Article 15. Right to take part in cultural life, to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and the protection of intellectual property

35. Please provide updated information on the benefits and assistance given, in general, to the population and, in particular, to young persons, students, older people, people with disabilities and the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

36. Please indicate what the State party is doing to promote awareness and enjoyment of the cultural heritage of the Sami people and other minorities in the State party.

38. Please provide more details on the special State grant system (paragraph 304 of the report).